

## Women in Leadership at Grace

The Session of Grace Church receives and affirms as biblical the basic position of the PCA denomination that the ordained leadership of the church, comprised of elders and deacons, is open only to qualified men, called by the members of their congregations. The Session additionally has discussed and affirmed the theological affirmations of *The Danvers Statement*, *50 Crucial Questions* and Bruce Ware's *Summaries of Egalitarian and Complementarian Positions*<sup>1</sup> and fully supports the participation of women in complementary positions of church leadership and service

As important as it is that we properly understand and apply the teaching of scripture so that women are not being denied opportunities to use their gifts where scripture would allow, it is even more important that we create a climate where leadership in Christ's name is seen in terms of service, not status, and where men honor and value women and women gladly submit to male leadership in the home and in the church. Stating the position and creating the structure is relatively easy; developing the culture is the harder, more important work.

We identify five major areas of ministry in Grace Church where there may be uncertainties regarding the involvement and leadership of women. It should be noted that the same uncertainties also exist, in most cases, regarding non-ordained men. These are 1) Adult Sunday School, 2) Growth Groups, 3) Public Worship, 4) Diaconal Ministries, and 5) Ministry Team Leadership. Our guidelines for leadership in these areas recognize that some ecclesiastical authority, most notably in teaching and in judicial matters, belongs exclusively to elders and cannot be delegated. However, it is our position that women and non-ordained men may profitably exercise their gifts for ministry and leadership in many areas, under the oversight of elders.

**Adult Sunday School** - Non-ordained persons may be invited with the approval of the Session to teach adult Sunday School classes under the oversight of an elder. Their style and mode of teaching should make clear, especially in matters that may be controversial, that their positions are not authoritative.

**Growth Groups** – With the approval of the Session, and by the appointment and under the supervision of the pastor, non-ordained persons may lead Growth Groups as follows: women may lead women's groups, men may lead men's groups and mixed-gender groups may be led by a mixed-gender team, preferably a married couple.

**Worship Service** – Non-ordained members may be invited by the pastor to lead elements of worship such as music, prayer, reading of scripture and testimony under his supervision. However, the current practice at Grace is that elders facilitate the congregational prayer and confession and deacons the offering and offertory prayer.

**Diaconal Ministry** – Non-ordained persons are encouraged to participate and lead, under the authority of the Board of Deacons, in ministries of mercy and in the management and care of church property and finances.

**Ministry Team Leadership** – One reason that nearly all of the ministries of Grace Church are conducted through Ministry Teams established and overseen by the Session is to more broadly encourage and utilize the leadership interests and abilities of all of our members. With approval of and oversight by the Session, non-ordained members may serve as Ministry Team leaders.

Adopted by the Session of Grace Church May 12, 2008

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<sup>1</sup> These documents and others presenting the Complementarian position are available online from website of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) at <http://www.cbmw.org/>.